DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 578 HE 010 666

AUTHOR Levy, Daniel
TITLE Comparative Perpectives on Academic Governance in Mexico. Yale Higher Education Research Group Working Paper.
INSTITUTION Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn. Inst. for Social and Policy Studies.
SPONS AGENCY Lilly Endowment, Inc., Indianapolis, Ind.
REPORT NO YHERG-28
PUB DATE Jul 77
NOTE 36p.; Best copy available
AVAILABLE FROM Higher Education Research Group, Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University, Box 1732 Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut 06520

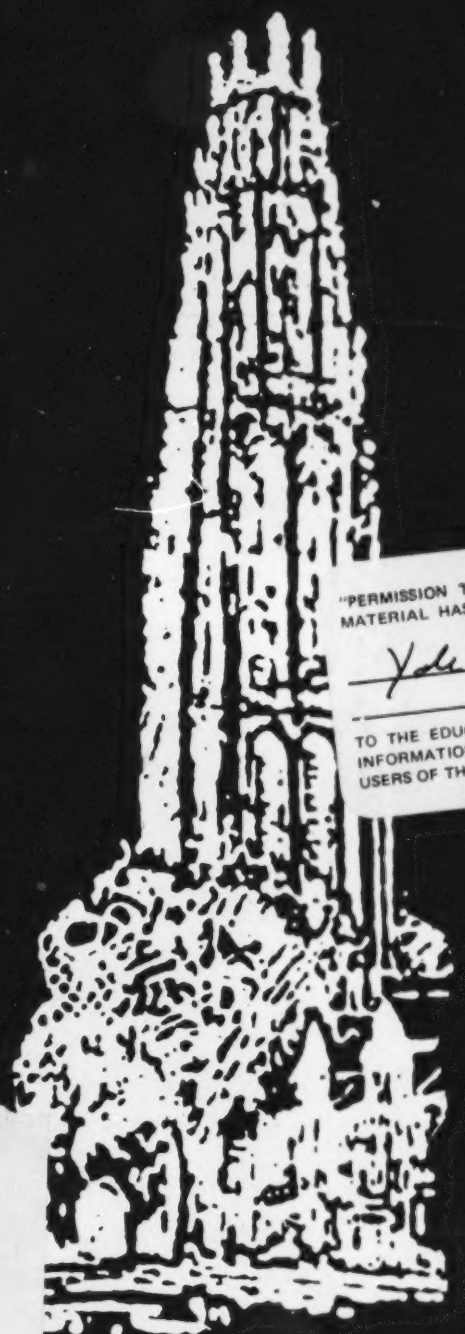
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Freedom; *Administrative Organization; Bibliographies; College Faculty; College Students; *Comparative Education; Educational Change; Educational History; Federal Government; *Foreign Countries; *Governance; *Higher Education; Interinstitutional Cooperation; *Power Structure; State Boards of Education; State Government
IDENTIFIERS Latin America; *Mexico

ABSTRACT

This overview of the history and current state of higher education in Mexico provides perspectives on the distribution of academic power and authority, both within institutions and in the system as a whole. The power structure may be explained in terms of six tiers of power from the department to the national government. The considerable power of faculty and students lies in their freedom of expression and choice in curricular matters, but there are indications that the balance of academic power could shift to higher levels, with the greatest changes likely at the level of inter-university authority, in coordinating and planning boards. Change could be slow or very turbulant, and the biggest power losers are likely to be faculty and students. A brief bibliography is included. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED162578



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Yale Univ.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH GROUP

Institution for Social and Policy Studies

YALE UNIVERSITY

New Haven, Conn. 06520

NE 010 666

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE IN MEXICO

by

Daniel Levy*

YALE HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH GROUP

WORKING PAPER
YHERG-28

July 1977

*Daniel C. Levy
Research Associate
Higher Education Research Group

The research reported in this paper has been part of the work conducted by the Yale Higher Education Research Group. It has been supported by research funds from the Lilly Endowment for the comparative study of academic organization and governance.

In the interest of fullest possible circulation of information and ideas, the Higher Education Research Group reproduces and distributes these Working Papers at the request of authors who are affiliated with the Group. The views expressed are those of the authors.

Content of this Working Paper is not for publication or for quotation without permission. A list of the Working Papers of the Group may be obtained from the address below.

Higher Education Research Group
Institution for Social and Policy Studies
Yale University
1732 Yale Station
New Haven, Connecticut 06520

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Evolution

While Peru and the Dominican Republic may dispute the honor of having the first legally sanctioned university in the New World, Mexico stakes definite claim to having the first in operation (1553). The Royal and Pontifical University had graduated over eight thousand students by the time that Harvard became the first institution of higher education in Anglo-America (1636). Despite this long heritage, and despite frequent paternal acknowledgements of the Latin American universities' pioneering efforts in such heralded causes as student participation and institutional autonomy, the comparative study of university governance is poorly informed by Latin American experience. My prime concern, therefore, is to bring comparative perspectives to bear on the distribution of academic power in Mexico.

I will try to reduce not only a regional but a disciplinary gap in the literature on higher education. A recent review article laments that political scientists have just begun to realize "that their own surroundings are as worthy of study and analysis as other segments of society."[1] There has been too little political analysis of intra-university governance and even less of university-government relations. And it should be added that still less literature exists on the comparative politics of higher education. This article addresses itself to both intra and extra-university components of governance, and tries to do so in explicitly comparative terms.

Though mother country influences were important, it would be a mistake to assume similar patterns of academic governance. Analysis of the Mexican system, one of Latin America's "big three" in higher education (with Brazil and Argentina) indicates greater institutional autonomy and less ministerial control than exists in the Continental European model. Nor does the Mexican system parallel that of the colossus to the north; the degree of student

participation and faculty (in the European sense of the term) autonomy from institution-wide authority belie that. One could start conceptualizing in terms of a hybrid system drawing from and compromising between two major foreign models, but I prefer to regard the Mexican system as a distinct third kind which, until very recently, has been fairly typical of a Latin American mode. This typical pattern has broken down with the advent of repressive military regimes. The era in which variation in governance among Latin American universities was less than that among U.S. universities is past.[2] Nonetheless, the Mexican case is itself significant, and it is still indicative, though not mirror reflective, of patterns in such nations as Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica. Further, it approximates the most dominant pattern of academic governance in Latin America for at least half a century.

The limits of mother country influence appear when one sees how frequently and dramatically the university's character has changed since the colonial era.[3] The Royal and Pontifical University, dominant throughout that era, was indeed modeled very closely after Spain's University of Salamanca. It served as an integral part of a holistic society. Critics argue that it was elitist and irrelevant to social needs and change--a mere tool of Crown and Church. They dismiss it as thoroughly conservative in curriculum. Defenders argue that the colonial University brought out the best within its society, achieved a real degree of community self-rule, and maintained academic excellence especially in law, philosophy and theocracy. Some would even suggest that, as in Italy, the glory days of the Mexican University may lie centuries back.[4]

Spanish control came to an end with the War for Independence (1810-1821). The next half century witnessed a bitter battle between conservatives and liberals over the University's fate. In contrast to the situation in many other Latin American nations, it was the conservatives who supported the

University and the liberals who opposed it. This Mexican paradox derived from the continuity of the colonial University into the nineteenth century. Conservatives praised the University as the greatest exponent of the Spanish culture they hoped to sustain. Liberals attacked it as "useless, pernicious and irreformable," a perfect example of the hispanic traditionalism they hoped to eradicate.[5] Totally dependent on which forces came tc power, the University was closed and opened three times, until liberal President Juárez's fourth and final closing in 1867. Pervasive political disorder had destroyed the organic unity of University and State. Only a few scattered faculties survived until a variety of institutes and colleges arose to fill the vacuum. The University's dormant period thus provided an impetus for institutional multiplicity.

The National University was not created, or recreated, until 1910, inspired by the positivists' urge for scientific and material development. Statutes provided for strong ministerial control. But a mere thirteen days after the University's inauguration, Mexico was plunged back into violent struggle, its epic Revolution. When a semblance of order finally returned (1917), Revolutionary apostles tried to reassert strong government control. Their attack on the University was three-pronged: the University was elitist in composition, insufficiently responsive to societal needs, and a divisive "power within a power." But the government's drive to control was frustrated again. Partly due to student demands inspired by the advent of autonomy elsewhere in Latin America, and mostly due to a simple need to extricate itself from the chronic turmoil in the University, the government granted partial autonomy in 1929 and full autonomy in 1933. The grants were hardly extended in good faith, the government providing insufficient funds and undertaking incessant ideological harassment to convert the University to its "socialist" principles. The government-University breach occasioned the

creation of new institutions such as the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) and El Colegio de México, a refuge for exiled Spanish scholars.

Neither side was to have its way. The ensuing compromise (1944), which has held to the present, established a significant but ambiguously incomplete degree of autonomy. The accord reached for UNAM (The National Autonomous University of Mexico) was to become the model for autonomous state universities created subsequently. The government and UNAM were to enjoy relatively good relations for about twenty years, until student demonstrations against the regime, unprecedented in scope, combined with unusual government repression to produce the worst episode in the University's history. The climax came with the slaughter of probably over 300 students in the Battle of Tlatelolco in 1968.[6] It was the single most violent event during an epoch of worldwide campus violence. Shock and immobilism have been followed by other violent encounters, especially severe in 1971. Conflict has been chronic in some of the provinces.

Recent trends in higher education have been far from all bleak, however. The national government has tried to disassociate itself from the events of 1968 and has often acted admirably in restraining the repressive hands of provincial governments. Most importantly, the government has financed tremendous demographic and institutional growth. This growth has outstripped even the impressive post-war average rate for Latin America. Previously, revolutionary chaos had curbed population growth and delayed the development of mass education; when birthrates and grade-school enrollments finally soared, so did demand for higher education.

Today, total population in institutions of higher education is reaching toward one million, more than half at the licenciado level.[7] This level is equivalent to the Italian laurea or French license degree; it is a "first degree," which Mexicans, like their European counterparts, prefer to regard

as closer to the U.S. master's than bachelor's degree. The other half attend the university for their preparatoria or "higher secondary" education; the government cautiously is trying to remove the preparatoria to non-university institutions, which they control. Graduate students number nearly twenty thousand.

Institutional Overview

Mexico now has 182 institutions of higher education.[8] There are a number of ways to classify them: university-technical sector, autonomous-non-autonomous, public-private, or federal district-provincial. Each can be deceiving, however, since many institutions do not live up to their names (e.g., "university" or "autonomous"). Nor is Mexican higher education as decentralized as the multiplicity of institutions might indicate; within the group are two giants, a few middle-size institutions, and many many dwarfs. UNAM boasts faculties in natural sciences, political and social science, business and administration, law, philosophy and letters, engineering, medicine, veterinary medicine, psychology and chemistry, in addition to its seven distinct "schools" in fields like economics and music. Some of the larger provincial institutions have from seven to twelve faculties and schools, while smaller ones have about five and some only one.

Mexico's thirty-three public universities are spread throughout the Republic, one to each state and two in the Federal District. They are governed simultaneously by the laws of government legislatures (federal or state) and their own statutes. For example, UNAM lives within its Organic Law of 1944 as ratified by its parallel Statute in 1945. Twenty-five public universities officially proclaim their autonomy. The provincial network has grown prodigiously. Though its ancestry can be traced back to colonial times, its history has been spotty and there were still only five provincial

universities in 1937. By 1949 there were ten, and by 1961 twenty-three. They receive about half their funds from the national government, 40% from their states and 10% from non-government sources. UNAM looks to the national government for 95% of its income, while the new Autonomous Metropolitan University in the Federal District hopes to draw a more significant share from tuition. The public universities are legally charged with imparting professional education, doing research and spreading cultural benefits.

Parallel to the university sector is the technical sector, comprised principally of the IPN and about fifty regional technical institutes (ITRs). Thus, Mexico has a binary system. The IPN is to the technical sector what UNAM is to the university sector, the undisputed giant and leader, or at least "center of gravity." Together these two "monsters" capture about 40% of the total higher education population.[9] The ITRs are fairly recent phenomena (1948). They hold about 5% of the total population, but still less of the licenciado share.

Control of the public technical sector rests squarely with the federal government. The Ministry appoints the institutes' executive directors, sets academic requirements and has considerable power overall. Still, the IPN remains notably self-governing in regard to many curricula and daily administrative matters. The Ministry lays down the guidelines and then relies on its appointed officials to choose appropriate paths. There is much valid concern over "academic drift," institutes seeking to emulate the governance patterns of the more prestigious universities. Nonetheless, a litmus test of who governs still points to the Ministry: when IPN students protest about conditions in their Institute they go downtown. The ITRs are more clearly controlled by the Ministry. This is due to their youth, smaller size, and lesser prestige. Their officials do not claim administrative autonomy; instead, they take pride in being the true vehicles of the government's

higher education policy. The IPN, on the other hand, sporadically frustrates the Ministry's efforts to treat the technical sector as an integral system. Both the ITRs and the IPN are financed totally by the national government.

Teacher training schools may form something of a third sector, but since most training falls below the licenciado level this "sector" is small. The biggest institution is the Higher Teaching School with more than 7,000 students.[10]

Most of the remaining institutions are private institutions,which have multiplied in recent years. Nearly 10% of Mexico's students study in the private sector. This percentage is only about half that in the U.S., but still imposing in comparison to neglible figures in many European and some Latin American nations. Again, institutional multiplicity should not be confused with extreme decentralization. Approximately 6% attend the "big four": The Technological Institute of Monterrey, The Autonomous University of Guadalajara, The Iberoamericana and La Salle. These are rather high prestige institutions. Despite the existence of many lesser institutions, the private sector is not the inferior one, as it is in Japan for example. Its attractiveness is enhanced by the overcrowding and endemic disorder which plague the major public universities. Mexico's private institutions are secular, in contrast to much of Latin America where they are Catholic. They must receive validation by the Ministry or a validated public university for their degrees to be meaningful. But they are virtually autonomous of government control. While the public universities fill the ranks of the public bureaucracy, the private ones meet the needs of Mexico's business sectors.

Levels of Organization

With an eye toward comparative analysis, I shall specify the loci of power in academic governance according to schema developed elsewhere.[11] Two major purposes are served: we see the concentration of authority at the intra-university rather than government levels and we see more precisely where authority lies within the university. Subsequently, I will analyze specific policy areas, illustrating this distribution of power by levels.

Level 1 is individual-member or department authority. If the first level of authority in the Continental European university is the chaired professor, and in the U.S. and England the department, many Latin American universities evolved a broader power distribution. Co-gobierno, a cherished legacy of the university reform, means government by professors, students, and occasionally even workers. The chair is less powerful than it once was in Mexico. Professors of different ranks have voting rights and are eligible to run for director or rector. They enjoy considerable freedom to determine the content of their courses. The chair is clearly less powerful than it has been elsewhere in Latin America, particularly Brazil.

Chair power certainly is restricted when students also became strong. Excluding the medieval Bologna model, it is hard to think of significant examples in which student power rivaled that in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century. If the European university was the university of the chaired professors, the Latin American university was sometimes the university of the students. Mexico never conformed to that characterization as much as some other Latin American nations, such as Argentina or Uruguay, but neither has it deviated as much from it in recent times.

It is impossible clearly to delineate levels of academic power, as members of one level may exercise their authority at a higher level. For

example, the traditional European chair was powerful enough that faculties (level 2) often appeared to be mere federations of chairs (level 1). The decision here is to attribute authority to the level at which it is exercised, while noting who exercises it.

Mexican professors and students exercise power individually and in ad hoc groups (level 1) but also through formal level 2 structures which are more than the sums of their parts. Students serve with professors on the faculty councils which, at level 2, largely determine academic policy. These councils are often composed of five students, five professors and the faculty director, though in other cases professors' representation is dominant. Students enjoy 25%-50% representation on university-wide councils. Various universities have instituted systems of student evaluations of professors.

But the greatest student power stems from their unstructured power, thus setting definite parameters for academic policy-making. For one thing, their freedom to choose their career of study strongly influences manpower and financial policies, since government subsidies generally follow these choices, not the other way around.[12] The other great unstructured student power is the power to disrupt. Student rights and powers are far less imposing in the private universities. But much more power is located at the level 1 base of Mexican public universities than at the level 1 base of U.S. or English universities, and it is more widely distributed than it is at the Continental universities' base.

Level 2 is faculty-wide or school-wide authority. Some universities have turned to a departmental structure with more inter-disciplinary and research work, but the European model of faculties still prevails over the North American model of departments within most universities. Executive authority is vested in the director. He can veto resolutions of the faculty council, propose new teaching appointments and sometimes designate chaired

professors. He negotiates with the rector for his faculty's funds. Legislative authority is vested in the faculty council, which sets general norms, has considerable power in programatic and personnel issues, and submits three choices to the university for director. In practice, the balance of power may lie with the director, but the council retains at least a strong advisory role and usually a significant policy role in academic affairs. Since the councils are generally representative bodies, they substantially limit oligarchic chair power. Compared to the Continental model, Mexico's faculties are stronger relative to level 1 though weaker relative to level 3. Within level 2, as level 1, there is a wider distribution of power among non-chaired professors and especially students than we see in the European model.

Level 3 is university-wide authority. There are three major bodies: the rectorship, the council and the governing board. There is no single pattern of relative strengths. Where the board exists, it appoints the rector and directors and in some cases other officials. It may serve as arbiter when the rector vetoes council resolutions. The council usually selects the board, or where there is none, itself selects the rector and directors. As the chief legislative body, it sets general norms for the university, approves curriculum proposals, grants degrees, approves the budget, and residually retains all authority not vested in other bodies. The councils are the broadest representative bodies in the institutions, with the great majority of members elected by the professors and students. The rector and director serve ex officio.

The rector is the chief executive, particularly where there is no board. He appoints some officials and exercises great influence in the appointment of others. He has veto power over council resolutions, except those of a "technical" nature. He is the university's major financial officer, negotiating "upward" with the government and "downward" with faculty directors. In some

major universities such as UNAM he appoints the number two financial official, the assistant secretary general. Leaving aside the student's important power to set certain parameters of financial policy by their career choices, the rector is the university's principal policy-making authority for financial affairs.

The authority of the board or the council may rival the rector's, but their power does not. The rector's power has grown considerably as the university has become a massive bureaucratic organization. He is regarded and received as the head of the university. The council may or may not be vibrant, depending on the institution; the board is generally uninvolved in most university issues and follows the rector's line. Other university-wide bodies, such as the financial board, are far less powerful than those considered here.

University-wide authority--the basic "middle-tier" of academic governance--is weaker than it is in the U.S. or probably England. The advent of governing boards and the growth of rectorship powers reduces the gap, but more authority still surges from the bottom-up within the Mexican university. A better parallel to the U.S. is found in Mexico's private universities, where academic organization is considerably more centralized than in the public universities. The middle-tier is, however, far stronger even in Mexico's public university than in those European cases where it is squeezed between pervasive chair and ministerial power. Reformers have good reason to complain about the tenacity of individual faculties to resist coordination but a good measure of the strength of level 3 versus level 2 is found in the supremacy of the rector over faculty directors--a distinct contrast to the Italian and Japanese cases, for example.[13] Many European nations have undertaken to strengthen their university administrations, but these generally remain weaker than Mexico's. Many Latin American nations were already moving in this same direction when

military coups probably accelerated the process by suppressing levels 1 and 2. Just as Mexican faculties are more than confederations of chaired professors, their universities are more than sums of their faculties.

Level 4 is inter-university authority.[14] Examples are coordinating and planning boards. Many Latin American nations have recently gone this route. While the Superior Council of Universities in Cuba, the Council of Rectors in Chile, and the Federal Council in Brazil manifest the government's will through compulsory inter-university boards, other Latin American nations, including Mexico, have only voluntary organizations.

ANUIES (National Association of Universities and Institutes of Higher Education) has played an important role in recommending certain guidelines and facilitating some inter-university dialogue, but it cannot pass binding resolutions. Certainly, it has become neither a U.S. style coordinating board nor an English UGC-style intermediary organization. For brief periods ANUIES has had some authority in inter-university subsidy distribution, but rarely--and never for UNAM. Recent government infiltration, especially via the inclusion of the technical institutes, has served to alienate the major universities. While it has played a helpful role in some of the educational reforms of the sixties and seventies, ANUIES has also been a fountain of unrealized dreams. The 1971-created National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) and the 1976-created Office for Coordination of Higher Education, Science, and Technology could provide some coordination, particularly in research. Following ANUIES' legacy, they probably will either be semi-independent and ineffective or increasingly government-controlled and possibly effective. Mexico has nothing approaching the level 4 power of U.S. state-wide planning boards.

Level 5 is state authority. Mexico is a modified federal system in which the states have considerable power over given matters unless the national

government chooses to assert its supreme authority. The states have no role in the regional technical institutes. Their role in the state universities is variable enough to defy generalization. In some cases the governor directly appoints the rector. In others he is represented on the governing board, or on the financial board, while in still others he has no formal administrative authority. The governor does set the level of state funding, often under the influence of federal funding. (There is some, limited, statistical relationship between federal and state subsidies).[15] He also has the power to suppress university dissidence. But coercive techniques run the risk of disorders which awaken the wrath not only of the university but sometimes of the national government.

While Mexico is one of relatively few countries with a viable federal structure of higher education, state power does not reach nearly the proportions of the U.S. or West German examples. Nonetheless, government power is far more decentralized than in most European or Latin American cases, with the notable exception of Brazil.

Level 6 is national government authority. Most political scientists consider the Mexican government to be a strong authoritarian one.[16] Unquestionably, it controls the technical sector of higher education: it appoints top officials and has considerable power over academic policy-making. But its power is relatively limited in many public universities. Its principal authority lies in setting the financial level of the university, again, however, within the constraints imposed by student numbers and career choices, and in possessing ultimate coercive power, which, however, it applies only at considerable cost. Its power to depose UNAM's rector appears to exceed greatly its power to appoint its own choice. It creates public institutions and recognizes private ones. But it does not control the ongoing administrative or academic policy of most public universities.

The role of the Mexican national government is at once far greater than that of its U.S. and far less than that of most of its European or Latin American counterparts. The U.S. has no national university and its national government role is less than Mexico's in the state unviersities. The U.S. national government is more powerful only in the area of granting research funds. In virtually all the particulars of governance (admissions, hiring, personnel appointments, curriculum setting, finance, etc.), Mexico does not approximate the Western European model either. It is especially interesting that university autonomy from government control could be stronger even where democratic freedoms and traditions are generally weaker.

Levels 1-6 reveal a distribution of power which allows us to place Mexican academic governance into broad cross-national perspective. Compared to public universities in the U.S., Mexican public universities vest more authority in the individual members of their communities and in the federal government, levels 1 and 6, at the expense of university-wide bodies, coordinating boards and state governments (levels 3-5). Mexico's private universities, with their greater university-wide authority and much reduced student and government roles provide a far better analogue to U.S. academic governance, especially to U.S. private universities. Compared to most of Continental Europe, at least traditionally, Mexican public universities vest authority more widely among the individual members of their communities, their faculties, and their university-wide bodies, at the expense of the national government and the traditional chair. Not the public universities but the officially non-autonomous National Polytechnic Institute may more closely approximate the Continental governance pattern! The government exercises considerable power over IPN appointments, curriculum and finance while daily governance is nonetheless largely entrusted to the institution. Authority is divided between the national government (level 6) on the one hand, and the IPN itself (levels 1-3) on the other. Less

ongoing authority is entrusted to the regional technical institutes; there level 6 is supreme, followed by levels 4 and 3.

A concise and illustrative, though very crude, comparative perspective on the distribution of academic power in Mexico is shown in Table 1. Admittedly, one could easily quibble with the exact ranking. The purpose is simply to illuminate very general comparative patterns. Especially noteworthy is the relative concentration of power at the lower levels of governance in UNAM and the more autonomous state universities, while the less autonomous universities and the technical institutes are governed more from the higher levels.

Again, one must be careful in generalizing from Mexican to Latin American patterns of academic governance. Although some universities have maintained considerable authority at levels 1-3, others have lost nearly all authority to levels 4 and 6.[17] It is even hard to generalize within Mexico's growing network of public universities, especially since the degree of state government control is so variable. Nevertheless, this analysis adds a major nation to our comparative schema. It also provides a head-start approximation for contemporary analysis of power distribution in some relatively similar systems, and for historical analysis of power distribution in the majority of Latin American systems.

Illustrative Policies

While levels analysis provides a useful short-hand device for comparing distributions of academic power across nations, it can be rather abstract. Therefore, more concrete analysis of specific policies should deepen our understanding. I will focus briefly on three important issues to illustrate the distribution of academic power in Mexico. These are (1) personnel selection, (2) academic policy-making, and (3) academic freedom. I do not propose a

TABLE 1

Mexican Academic Governance in Broad Comparative Perspective

Institutions	Bottom Levels*	Middle-Tier**	Top Levels***
UNAM & Mexico's more autonomous state universities	strong	medium	weak
Mexico's less autonomous state universities	medium	medium	strong
Mexico's technical institutes	weak	medium	strong
Mexico's private universities	weak	strong	weak
U.S. state universities; England	medium	strong	weak
Continental Europe	strong	weak	strong
South America's Southern Cone	weak	medium	strong

* = levels 1 and 2

** = level 3

*** = levels 4-6 (distinguished only between weak and strong)

methodological defense for these choices except to say that they seem to be fairly typical policy areas which, taken together, cover a good deal of ground in academic governance. I offer them less to prove than to illustrate the comparative levels analysis offered above.

The glaring omission is financial policy, which I have considered elsewhere.[18] To summarize my findings with undue brevity: UNAM internally draws up its budget requests; it must negotiate these with the government, a necessity common to nearly all public universities, which detracts from their autonomy; bargaining is better than unilateral government imposition, however, and UNAM negotiates directly with the president; UNAM receives one lump sum rather than targeted piecemeal grants for ongoing costs; research and construction allocations are more variable and controlled; there is very little accountability for how funds are spent; annual inflation-controlled subsidies have never declined since 1961; even adjusted for student population growth, subsidies have grown almost linearly, in sharp contrast to the situation in the Mexican government's own National Polytechnic Institute. While some of these facets of relative financial autonomy are common to public universities elsewhere, others emphatically are not.

(1) Personnel selection. For nearly half a century appointments in Latin American universities were typically made more autonomously than in Europe (ministries) or the U.S. (boards of trustees). Anglo-American practice has emphasized the role of externally-appointed boards. By contrast, bottom-up procedures characterized the process in many major Latin American nations. Recently, however, repressive regimes have changed the norm drastically. Ministry officials in many nations now exercise appointive powers. Chile has taken the probably unprecedented step of imposing military officers as administrative heads. Mexico, however, has not been part of this trend. A somewhat favorable but mixed picture emerges for the state universities, while

UNAM enjoys unusual autonomy in personnel selection, seen in comparative perspective.

Traditionally, Latin American professors, like their European counterparts, have been selected by competitive examinations, but the enrollment explosion has led to many appointments by the rector, from suggestions by the faculty director. Often, part-time professors are established professionals who simply are asked to teach a course or two. Thus there are "titular" or "permanent" professors arriving via competitions, and "temporary" ones arriving via direct appointment. Only a few state universities give the governor a role in selection and the federal role appears limited, but the overlap of part-time professors and government employees, as in Italy, may be an indirect source of government influence.[19] Like the U.S. and contrary to the Continental European mode, Mexican university professors are <u>not</u> civil servants but employees of the institution, thus bolstering university (level 3) power instead of government (level 6) power.

University-wide and faculty-wide councils are elected by professors and students. Faculty directors are usually selected by the university-wide councils but sometimes by the "governing board" or rector or even the governor. The governing board, often vilified as a U.S.-style board of trustees alien to community self-rule, exists in about half the public universities, possibly usurping power from level 1. But even it is generally selected by the widely representative university council. The rector usually has broad powers to appoint other officials, such as the secretary general (the administrative second-in-command). Thus, appointments to most positions are made from within the university community. There is considerable variation among the state universities, however.

It is more difficult to generalize about rector selection.[20] The issue deserves special attention since the rector is the university's most powerful

official. Table 2 gives the breakdown for public universities excluding UNAM. Survey B is more recent than survey A, but it does not indicate when a university body selects the rector from lists submitted by other bodies. I will define "autonomous" selection only where power resides rather squarely with the university (level 3) rather than the government (levels 5-6): council appointments are autonomous; government selections are non-autonomous; even government-council selections are non-autonomous; and board selections are autonomous only if the board itself was appointed by the council. Thus 15 of 29 cases (52%) are autonomous in Survey A and 22 of 31 cases (71%) in Survey B. These figures tell us only about formal processes, whereas external influences might operate more surreptitiously. External authority is somewhat restricted by statutory stipulations about professional requisites, but these are not too rigorous. Rector selection in the state universities looms as a variable process, probably the weakest link in the public universities' administrative autonomy.

Rector selection in UNAM is the most significant case. From 1910-1929 the president exercised legal authority to appoint the rector. In 1929 his authority was reduced to proposing a list of three choices to the university council, and in 1933 he lost all authority. Unfortunately, the university often had trouble choosing a single rector. Therefore, in 1944, a governing board was created and vested with appointive powers. Many Mexicans charged that the board was a step toward the U.S. model of extra-university control. The evidence is mixed: the board is not as pure a community body as the council, and many prominent public figures have served on it, but these figures generally have been prominent scholars as well. UNAM's board is still a far cry from, for example, the extra-university flavor of most U.S. (private and public) or most English boards. The Mexican board is a basically internal body so that its appointive power usually means level 3 power, not higher.

TABLE 2

Rector Selection in the State Universities

Selected by	Survey A	Survey B	
Council	9 (31.0%)	16 (51.6%)	Autonomous
Governing Board (itself council-appointed)	6 (20.7%)	6 (19.4%)	Autonomous
(not itself council-appointed)	3 (10.3%)	3 (9.7%)	Non-Autonomous
Government	3 (10.3%)	6 (19.4%)	Non-Autonomous
Government from Council List	3 (10.3%)		Non-Autonomous
Council from Government List	5 (17.2%)		Non-Autonomous
Total	29 (99.8%)	31 (100.1%)	

Source Survey A: Miguel González Avelar and Leoncio Lara Sáenz, Legislación mexicana de la enseñanza superior (México: UNAM, 1969) pp. 40-46;
Survey B: Alfonso López Bello, Análisis comparativo (México: SEP, 1974) p. 255.

A more serious charge is that the board is a vehicle for presidential interference. The major evidence adduced includes: (1) it is easier surreptitiously to influence a small (fifteen-member) board, where each vote is crucial, than a large legislative council; (2) the Mexican president is very powerful and it stands to reason that the board could not appoint someone antagonistic to him; (3) the president certainly has played a role in the re-election and the downfall of certain rectors. On the other hand: (1) influencing a single vote merely tips the balance within a predominantly intra-university decision; (2) there are many specific written and oral accounts by university participants in the process which belie the notion of presidential influence.

My conclusion is that UNAM and certain state universities indeed select their own rectors, within the bounds of discretion, and with only exceptional, indefinite, government interference. Still, rector selection remains the most critical issue for autonomy in appointments because the degree of university control involved is more questionable than it is for other issues and because the rector is the most important policy-maker. The relative autonomy of the Mexican process appears more impressive in cross-national contexts of stronger, more direct, external appointment, levels 4-6.

(2) Academic policy-making. The government's hand is seen far less in ongoing academic policy-making than in personnel appointments. This is the case cross-nationally, as the lower levels tend to have more authority than higher levels in ongoing academic tasks, or than they themselves do in appointments. Those Mexican state universities which suffer government interferences in appointments, while retaining authority to set academic policies, perhaps come closest to approximating the U.S. or Canadian patterns of academic governance. As opposed to most European nations, where Ministries often set admissions criteria, curriculum offerings and degree requirements, Mexican

academic policy-making lies within the purview of the individual universities themselves. Universities do need official recognition either by the state or one of its previously recognized universities, but the government then delegates the authority to set academic policies. Let us briefly focus on admissions and curriculum policies.

Controlled admissions policies may mean power at university administration or government levels whereas open admissions leaves power largely with the students. There have traditionally been two models for admissions to Latin American universities, one characterized by fairly competitive exams and the other by nearly open admissions.[21] Brazil has been the prime example of the former. The latter was probably the more common practice until recently. Its champions included demagogues like Péron of Argentina as well as progressives who regarded easy access as democratic. Mexico's public universities have followed the latter model, with either no admissions requirements or very rudimentary ones based on aptitude exams, acquired-knowledge exams, or preparatoria grades. Requirements are more rigorous for the private universities. The IPN also claims to have tougher exams than the public universities but the difference is not great. Singularly important is the free pass from the preparatoria level. UNAM and IPN students enter automatically into a professional career if they are presently enrolled in the preparatoria of that institution. Students enter directly into the faculty of their choice. The absence of rigorous admissions policies means, in effect, that students themselves determine the practices.

Students also have a major say in curriculum policy. This stems in part from their representation on the prominent university-wide council and faculty-wide councils. It also stems from their informal power--the power to disrupt. The pattern for the century was perhaps set by a major strike in UNAM's Law School (1912) against the imposition of final exams. While different

university authorities have considerable powers over academic policy-making, students set certain limits.

Other nations have clamped down. Many European nations which traditionally permitted nearly open admissions have established stringent numerus clausus. Authoritarian South American republics have taken sterner steps to restrict access and career choice. Others, like Venezuela, have taken only sporadic steps, e.g., imposing a "no repeating rule" aimed at ridding the university of "professional students" who remain matriculated despite lack of progress. But Mexico holds pretty steadfastly to the previously common Latin American pattern in which students exercised an "all too human tendency to utilize their organizational strength to oppose upgrading of standards and tightening of requirements."[22] It is fair to add that idealistic conviction plays a role insofar as students see tougher standards, especially in admissions, as elitist and undemocratic.

The government has definite preferences for increased rigor and altered career distributions but explicitly acknowledges the individual's right to choose and implicitly acknowledges potent student power. The university administration too has preferences, but attempts even at career orientation are exceptional. The major recent effort to tighten admissions exams and set some minimal quotas on careers was made by UNAM's administration (1965) not the government. The effort set off heated student protests and the government, more concerned with order than academic quality, aided in the rector's downfall! University-wide administration takes a back seat to student demand on admissions policies.

Although the government (levels 5 and 6) is disturbed by the declining quality of its public universities, by exorbitant drop-out rates, and by surpluses and deficiencies in different careers, it does little to force change. Its attitude is poignantly expressed by a "high official" questioned

by an eminent professor about the need to meet growing demand for higher education: "Look, ingeniero, the problem is that we are short eight thousand openings for next year for graduates of secondary schools; what do they want? a degree, don't they? . . . okay, let's give it to them! Let them come once or twice a week, let them read a few books or notes, and after two years let's give them a degree."[23]

A recent challenge to the university community's authority over academic affairs comes from the Open University. The detrimental effects to the community of off-campus education have been outlined by renowned UNAM professors such as Leopoldo Zea.[24] Further, the Universidad Abierta could function as a (government-favored) structure parallel to the traditional university, at least draining away students and resources. The dangers have not materialized, however. Though inspired by the English experiment, the Universidad Abierta is far from a carbon copy. It is much less ambitious in scope and innovation. Three years after passing the statute, UNAM had only 1858 enrolled students.[25] The experiment has gotten nowhere in the state universities. While it provides for education outside the classroom, in the hospitals, housing developments, laboratories, libraries and work centers, the Open University does not basically alter degree requisites. Most importantly, the university administration (level 3) cannot impose the plan on any unwilling faculty (level 2). Faculties which do accede retain considerable latitude to choose goals, methods and personnel. The Open University's threat to autonomy remains only a potential one.

(3) Academic Freedom. One of the most cherished legacies of the Córboda reforms (1918), which lit the path of autonomy from Argentina to most of Latin America, has been academic freedom. Even many authoritarian governments have tolerated a notable degree of free expression, while the university often functions as a critical sanctuary for dissent, and even as the womb of many

important political movements. The Latin tradition of territorial autonomy has protected these roles. Again, while the situation has changed dramatically in most Latin American nations, it has changed far less in Mexico.

Academic freedom is officially pronounced in the statutes of many Mexican universities. Its meaning is a bit fuzzy, however. For one thing, there is ambiguity as to whether territorial inviolability is intrinsic to autonomy. Basic respect for the campus is unquestionably violated when government-hired thugs and infiltrators assume the guise of students to spread terror and sabotage organizations, or when the army occupies the campus, as in 1968. The former is more common than the latter and both are more common in the provinces than in the Federal District. Debate centers on whether the campus should be treated more as a part of the national territory or as a sanctuary within it. The relevance of territorial sanctity to autonomy is not so widely accepted as it once was.

Even if we define academic freedom broadly, as the unrestricted expression of professor and students views, Mexico's public universities generally receive high marks. Unfortunately, there are flagrant violations. Some come from within the university, from oppressive chaired professors or radical students. Others come from government interference. The frequency of the latter varies greatly in the provinces. National government-UNAM relations, national government-state university relations, and state government-state university relations lie along a spectrum of more to less acceptance of academic freedom.

The best proof that academic freedom from official harassment is great is that so many professors who are fervent critics say so.[26] Many regime critics use their university positions to address themselves to the regime's lack of concern for equality and democracy; many faculties teach with a distinct marxist bias. Admittedly, many student activists might not agree

that academic freedom is ample. If the government allows less academic freedom than there is in the U.S. or West Europe, it allows far more than there is in other non-democracies.

The considerable range of academic freedom in Mexico underscores the considerable power of professors and students at level 1. Freedom of expression and freedom of choice in matters like curriculum content contrasts sharply with patterns of university-wide and government control in more authoritarian settings. Similar findings apply to a range of academic policies including admissions policy. Concerning personnel appointments, level 3 (university-wide authority) takes on greater significance, not only in comparison with lower levels, which is common cross-nationally, but even somewhat in comparison with higher levels, which is not. These are all very broad findings but they do illustrate, with specific policies, the overall pattern of power distribution, by levels, that we elaborated for Mexico in explicit comparison with international practices. Both government and university levels play important roles in Mexico, but continued concentration of power at lower levels stands out prominently.

Trends

There are indications that the balance of academic power could shift upward to the higher levels. This possibility emerges from the two major trends in Mexican higher education. The first is expansion. Cross-nationally, internal reforms aimed at democratization have not only weakened chair power but have tended to result in increased government power. Also cross-nationally, the simple fact of soaring costs has enlarged government's appetite to control higher education. There is abundant evidence that the Mexican government feels this urge toward control in the face of perceived university inefficiency. It strives to establish criteria which would allow it to give funds a bit more

on the basis of university performance and less on the basis of student population and university strength. State government efforts to increase their power have been less sustained--and often cruder.

Expansion may increase the government's appetite to control while, however, increasing the difficulty of doing so. A key example is UNAM's plunge into gianthood, apparently making it harder to control.[27] But expansion has led to a second major trend in Mexican higher education, system decentralization, that may itself lead to greater government control. The link between decentralization and increased government control is perhaps somewhat paradoxical since decentralization is generally associated with decreased government control, but government efforts find more suitable soil where autonomous power is less entrenched. New institutions develop which the government can control more effectively. Student population growth, and UNAM's decreasing ability to handle it, have spurred prolific efforts at creating such institutions. The national government develops a network of relatively controlled technical institutes, and expands the state universities. UNAM, which it cannot control, continues to grow, but not relative to the rest of higher education.

As in other nations, the government (national and state) flexes its muscles as it decides where to create what kinds of institutions. Further, it partly dictates their initial statutes. It need not contend with entrenched student groups. It can establish new careers, departments, and modes of intra-university governance. And as domination by the two giant institutions in the capital city (UNAM and IPN) gives way to a multiplicity of important institutions, viable inter-university coordinating boards become more feasible. The new institutions simply do not have the same concentrated strength at levels 1-3 to thwart efforts at control by higher levels.

The government prefers to talk not of increasing its own control but of

strengthening inter-university coordination. Like government control, this extra-university level has grown in importance in many other hemispheric nations. Mexican efforts to establish planning boards, central policy coordination and systemization have been numerous. But coordinating agencies look back on a lineage of frustrated ancestors. The government may well try to pump new power into level 4 organizations; in this way it would increase control, avoid direct responsibility and side-step charges of suppressing autonomy.

If I must guess the future I would predict that the greatest change in academic authority will occur at level 4. But the universities will perceive the masking of level 6 power. Change might either be slow--or very turbulent.

Typical of their man-in-the-middle position, university-wide bodies (level 3) will both lose and gain authority. They will gain from below and lose to above. A good example is the Open University. It draws some authority away from individual faculties. But this authority will accrue less to the established university administration than to a new structure, more susceptible to external control. In sum, university administrations will try to rationalize their structures by centralizing authority while inter-university organizations will try to rationalize higher education. Increases of power at levels 3 and 4 at the expense of levels 1 and 2 would appear to some to mark a certain "North Americanization" of power distribution.

Faculties (level 2) will lose power to level 3, retrieving some from level 1, but also losing some as they fragment into institutes, schools and departments. Their main losses thus far have come in the creation of new departments and the shifting of research projects to separate institutes.

The biggest power losers might be the individual students and professors (level 1). Their loss would stem from the replacement of ad hoc practices with regularized policy. An exceptional feature of Mexican academic governance

would fade. Examples could include stricter admissions or career quotas.

While some redistribution of power is occurring, it is unlikely that the present structure of academic governance will change dramatically. Accretion of power at the higher levels could draw less from power redistributions per se than from power creation. In fact, it is almost euphemistic to talk of academic "governance" in many areas of Mexican higher education. The question sometimes is not "who governs?" but "does anyone govern?" Fundamental decisions may not be taken at any level. To the extent that "non-decisions" are the result of student and faculty opposition to rationalizing policies, however, government moves to fill the power vacuum would come at the expense of lower levels.

If the direction of change is relatively clear, its breadth and pace shroud the future in uncertainty. Until recently, "the" Latin American pattern of academic governance stood out for its concentration of power at lower levels and for relative institutional autonomy from government control. Compared to its sister republics' headlong plunge in the opposite direction, Mexico has deviated only marginally.

Footnotes

[1] Samuel K. Gove and Carol Everly Floyd, "Research on Higher Education Administration and Policy: An Uneven Report," Public Administration Review, January-February 1975, p. 117. Also see Daniel Levy, "The Politics of Higher Education," Higher Education Review 2, no. 2 (Winter 1978-79, forthcoming).

[2] George Waggoner, "La educación superior en Latinoamérica," Revista de la ANUIES 3, no. 3 (1974), p. 3 presents the traditional argument. Obviously, I am dealing in generalities: Mexican academic governance was not entirely typical of other Latin American systems, nor is it irrelevant to those which now labor under military control.

[3] A good introductory history is provided by, Jesús Silva Herzog, Una historia de la Universidad de México y sus problemas (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1974).

[4] Burton R. Clark, Academic Power in Italy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 16.

[5] This was the phrase of José Luis Mora, a leading liberal intellectual.

[6] Octavio Paz gives one of the best accounts in The Other Mexico, trans. by Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1972).

[7] The figures are 970,248 and 545,182, respectively, as reported by ANUIES, La enseñanza superior en México, 1970-1976 (Mexico City: ANUIES, 1977).

[8] Data from ANUIES's "Instituciones de educación superior, por estado," an unpublished listing. As of 1971 there were 125 institutions: 27 public universities, 11 private universities, 50 government institutes and 37 private institutes. ANUIES, La enseñanza superior en México 1971 (Mexico: ANUIES, 1974). Basic institutional overviews are found in Thomas Noel Osborn II, Higher Education in Mexico (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1976), and Richard King et al., The Provincial Universities of Mexico (New York: Praeger, 1971).

[9] I calculate 44% from ANUIES, La enseñanza, 1971.

[10] SEP, Informe de labores 1975 (México: SEP, 1975), p. 219 reports 7210.

[11] See especially John Van de Graaff, Burton Clark, Dorotea Furth, Dietrich Goldschmidt, Donald Wheeler, Academic Power: Patterns of Authority in Seven National Systems of Higher Education (New York: Praeger, 1978). I have, however, freely adapted the schema to the Mexican case.

[12] See Levy, "Limits on Government's Financial Control of the University: Mexico," a working paper published by the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University, New Haven, 1977, pp. 18-22.

[13] See Clark, Academic Power in Italy, p. 89 and Donald F. Wheeler, "The Structure of Academic Governance in Japan," a working paper published by the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University, New Haven, 1976, p. 17.

[14] Our schema is not sensitive enough to non-government external control, a particularly important point for the private universities.

[15] Levy, "Limits," p. 32.

[16] See, for example, José Luis Reyna and Richard S. Weinert, eds., Authoritarianism in Mexico (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1977).

[17] There are but a few helpful up-to-date works in English on academic governance in some of the major Latin American countries. See: Jerry Haar, The Politics of Higher Education in Brazil (New York: Praeger, 1977); Michael Fleet, "Academic Freedom and University Autonomy in Chile," Newsletter of the Latin American Studies Association 7, no. 2 (1977), pp. 23-38; Secretariat of the International Association of Universities, "Higher Education in Peru," Bulletin of the IAU 21, no. 4 (1973), supplement pp. 1-19; Orlando Albornoz, "Higher Education and the Politics of Development in Venezuela," Journal of Interamerican Studies 19, no. 3 (1977), pp. 291-314.

[18] Levy, "Limits," passim.

[19] See Roderic Ai Camp "Education and Political Recruitment in Mexico: The Alemán Generation," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 18, no. 3 (1976), pp. 295-322.

[20] Substantial evidence on UNAM appears in Levy, "University Autonomy and Regime Authoritarianism: The Case of the National University of Mexico," Latin American Research Review (forthcoming).

[21] Charles Wagley, "Latin America," in Higher Education: From Autonomy to Systems, ed. James A. Perkins and Barbara Baird Israel (New York: International Council For Educational Development, 1972), p. 233.

[22] Robert Scott, "Student Political Activism in Latin America," in Students in Revolt, ed. Seymour Lipset and Philip Altbach (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), pp. 423-24.

[23] Quoted by Manuel Pérez Rocha, "Enseñanza abierta," Excélsior, January 9, 1976.

[24] "De la universidad abierta," Revista de la Universidad de Yucatán 14, no. 81 (1972), pp. 32-35.

[25] Coordinación de la Universidad Abierta, "Informe" (unpublished report, 1975).

[26] For example, Gastón García Cantú, interviewed February, 1976, Mexico City.

[27] Levy, "Coping with Giantism: The National University of Mexico," London Times Higher Education Supplement, 20.1.78.

INSTITUTION FOR SOCIAL AND POLICY STUDIES

The mission of the Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS) is to encourage and undertake multidisciplinary research and education. The ISPS is oriented to the exploration of social problems rather than to the refinement of discipline-based methodology. In recent years, ISPS research has focused on the problems of the city, education, health service delivery, and on the modeling of social systems. Currently, research is also being developed on criminal justice, governmental reform, environment, income distribution, aging, the policy-making process, and value problems in public policy. ISPS is not a consulting organization but an instrument for enriching the social sciences and related disciplines in the University.

Higher Education Research Group
Institution for Social and Policy Studies
1732 Yale Station (36 Mansfield Street)
New Haven, Connecticut 06520